



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Teton
National Park

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Grand Teton National Park News Release

Injured Climber Flown from Death Canyon

Grand Teton National Park rangers and an interagency contract helicopter evacuated an injured climber from Death Canyon early Tuesday morning, July 11. The all-night rescue operation began Monday evening, July 10, when climber Stephanie Ewert, age 30, of Wilson, Wyoming, placed a 911 cell phone call to report that her climbing partner, Sven Taow, age 24, of Ammon, Idaho, had fallen and sustained serious injuries to his ankle while ascending a popular multi-pitch climbing route called the Snaz in the lower section of Death Canyon.

Taow was climbing at an elevation of about 8,400 feet on a difficult pitch near the top of the Snaz – a pitch rated 5.10 on the Yosemite decimal system – when he fell approximately 70 feet, pulling several pieces of his protection out of the rock along the way. He was wearing a helmet at the time of his fall. Despite his injuries, Taow and Ewert were able to lower themselves to the base of the climbing route. Ewert then continued to the Death Canyon trailhead, where she placed a cell phone call for assistance at 8:45 p.m.

Three rangers began hiking in to the scene immediately, and four more rangers followed with additional rescue equipment, including a wheeled litter. The first team of rangers reached Taow at about 11:00 p.m. and provided emergency medical care. They also assessed the situation and set up a technical belay system for lowering Taow to the trail. The second group of rangers reached the scene at about 2:30 a.m., and together, they lowered Taow and moved him to the Death Canyon patrol cabin, arriving there around 4:30 a.m. Due to Taow's extremely painful injuries and a concern for patient care, plus the rough terrain of the Death Canyon trail for a wheeled litter rescue, rangers decided to utilize an interagency contract helicopter for evacuation.

The helicopter landed in a meadow just west of the Death Canyon patrol cabin at 6:15 a.m. on Tuesday morning. Rangers then loaded Taow inside the helicopter, and flew him directly to St. John's Medical Center in Jackson for treatment of his injuries.

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